

REMARKS

The specification has been amended. Claims 1 - 2, 5, 8, 12 - 14, and 16 - 18 have been amended. No new matter has been introduced with these amendments, all of which are supported in the specification as originally filed. Claims 7, 10 - 11, and 15 have been cancelled from the application herein, and Claim 6 was previously cancelled. Claims 1 - 5, 8 - 9, 12 - 14, and 16 - 20 remain in the application.

Applicants previously filed an Appeal Brief for the subject application, and this Appeal Brief is dated March 10, 2006. (The arguments made in this previously-filed Appeal Brief are hereby incorporated herein by reference.) An Examiner's Answer dated June 6, 2006 (hereinafter, "the Examiner's Answer") was prepared by the Examiner, responsive to this Appeal Brief. Paragraph (3) of the Examiner's Answer states that Claims 3 - 5, 7 - 9, 11, and 15 - 20 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Accordingly,

- the limitations from allowable dependent Claim 7 have been merged into independent Claim 1, thus rendering Claim 1 allowable;
- the limitations from independent Claim 1 have been merged into allowable Claim 5, which is now an independent claim, thus rendering Claim 5 allowable;
- the limitations from allowable dependent Claim 11 (and dependent Claim 10) have been merged into independent Claim 13, thus rendering Claim 13 allowable;
- the limitations from allowable dependent Claim 15 have been merged into

independent Claim 14, thus rendering Claim 14 allowable; and

- the limitations from independent Claim 1 have been merged into allowable Claim 18, which is now an independent claim, thus rendering Claim 18 allowable.

All remaining dependent claims depend from one of the allowable independent claims. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that all claims, as currently presented, are in condition for allowance. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the pending rejected claims, withdrawal of all presently outstanding rejections, and allowance of all remaining claims at an early date.

Respectfully submitted,

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